

CONGRESSIONAL PAY CUT FOR
DEBT REDUCTION ACT**HON. DAN BURTON**

OF INDIANA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, March 4, 2010

Mr. BURTON of Indiana. Madam Speaker, I rise today to introduce the "Congressional Pay Cut for Debt Reduction Act" and to encourage all of my colleagues to support this bill.

Madam Speaker, the American people are angry. They are struggling to hold onto their jobs, to hold onto their houses and to pay their bills. Yet they see Washington spending their hard earned tax dollars indiscriminately.

Over the last five years, Federal spending has increased from nearly 20 percent as a share of the economy to 24.7 percent as the government's expenditures jumped from \$2.47 trillion to \$3.52 trillion—a 42-percent increase. These are the highest levels of spending as a share of the economy since World War II.

To make matters worse, much of this spending, particularly the spending spree of the last three years, has been financed with borrowed money. Currently, the national debt exceeds \$12.1 trillion (about \$40,000 per U.S. citizen). And the spending shows no signs of stopping. Less than a month ago my colleagues on the other side of the aisle, jammed through on a party line vote a bill to increase the government's debt ceiling by a staggering \$1.9 trillion; to over \$14 trillion. And the President's recently released budget plan for Fiscal Year 2011 and beyond projects the national debt to reach the unprecedented and astronomical sum of \$24.5 trillion by 2019.

The American people are angry at this reckless spending. At Town Hall meetings across my District, Hoosiers are asking me when Washington is going to stop the madness. They want leadership on this issue; they want accountability; they want to know where the buck stops.

Today the buck stops here. The American people are sacrificing to make ends meet for the good of their families. Every department, agency, program and office across the Federal government should follow that example by finding common-sense solutions that will help them save money—by doing more with less, just like the American people are doing. That same principle should apply to, and start with, the House and Senate as well. It is time—in fact it is past time—that the Congress steps up to the plate and shows we are willing to make sacrifices too for the good of our country.

That is why I am introducing the "Congressional Pay Cut for Debt Reduction Act." This bill will reduce pay for members in the House and Senate by 10 percent—starting in January 2011 to meet the requirements of the 27th Amendment to the Constitution—block any future automatic increase to member pay, and use the money saved to help pay down our national debt. This would be the first pay cut for Members of Congress since April 1, 1933—during the Great Depression. This bill is unlikely to solve all of our Nation's economic problems but it will show the American people that Members of Congress are willing to sacrifice along with them in these hard economic times. I urge my colleagues to support the bill.

NATIONAL PEACE CORPS WEEK

HON. LEE TERRY

OF NEBRASKA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, March 4, 2010

Mr. TERRY. Madam Speaker, since 1961, the Peace Corps has had 200,000 Americans volunteer in 139 different countries around the globe. Today, the Peace Corps currently has 7,671 volunteers working in 76 countries.

In observance of National Peace Corps Week, I would like to honor 20 volunteers from Nebraska's 2nd District currently serving around the world:

Thomas Connelly, Steven Easterby, Jennifer Gaspers, Ashley Gries, Brandon Gries, Laura Groggel, Victoria Hasiak, Curtis Hudson, Margo Hunt, Annette Hunthrop, Mary Johnson, Laura Koonce, Nathan Lee, Keith Petit, Terri Pohl, Brigitte Pohren, Clara Reyes, Diane Ruskamp, Jessica Scates, Kacie Sis.

These men and women have done a great service to the Peace Corps, their country, and the world.

INTRODUCTION OF THE SMITHSONIAN
FREE ADMISSION ACT OF
2010**HON. ELEANOR HOLMES NORTON**

OF THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, March 4, 2010

Ms. NORTON. Madam Speaker, today I introduce the Smithsonian Free Admission Act to reinforce 170 years of consistent Smithsonian policy of admitting the public to all permanent exhibits without charge. This policy has served the Nation well. Families come to Washington to learn about their country through its public monuments and sites. While the private amenities can be costly for the average family, Americans have looked forward to the free museums and other official offerings for generations. The Smithsonian's free admission policy reflects the intent of its founder, John Smithson, whose gift to the federal government carried the condition that the Smithsonian be established to increase the knowledge of the public, free of charge. The bill establishing the Smithsonian, introduced by Senator William C. Preston on February 17, 1841, stated explicitly that the Smithsonian would "preserve and exhibit with no fee" all works of art and science. This intent and tradition was interrupted by the Smithsonian's Board of Regents, without notice to Congress, with the casual comment that it would charge an admission fee for a permanent exhibit for the first time in its history, and on January 29, 2007, the Smithsonian instituted a fee for admission to the National Museum of Natural History's Butterfly Pavilion. Congress, of course, not the Board of Regents, should decide so basic a policy, especially when it departs from long-standing public policy. The admission fee sets a harmful precedent for future permanent exhibits, which will make it difficult to deny the other Smithsonian entities that right and may encourage other Smithsonian entities to structure their exhibits to fit the Butterfly Pavilion model.

The Butterfly Pavilion opened on February 14, 2008. Although the Smithsonian had pre-

viously charged fees for films and shows, such as IMAX films, the National Air and Space Museum's Planetarium, and the National Zoo's Christmas Lights special, the \$6 admission fee for the Butterfly Pavilion marked the first time admission fees were charged for a permanent exhibit. My bill requires a report to Congress in advance of any proposed fees and requires the Secretary of the Smithsonian Institution to submit a plan for funding the Butterfly Pavilion, in order to eliminate the admission fee for the exhibit.

The Smithsonian Modernization Act, which I am also introducing today, addresses the Smithsonian's fundraising capacity by restructuring and expanding the Smithsonian's Board of Regents, from a board almost half of whose members are public officials to a board consisting solely of private citizens, who will have greater experience and fundraising capacity than public officials. The fundraising capability of the Smithsonian is clear in the opening of the National Portrait Gallery, for example. According to a Congressional Research Service, CRS, report (RL 33560), donors contributed funds for the new auditorium and roof over the courtyard of the National Portrait Gallery.

The Smithsonian Modernization Act and similar measures, not admission fees, provide the most realistic vehicles to raise funds for the Smithsonian without cost to the government or to the public. Admission fees can bring in only token amounts. According to the CRS, the Smithsonian has long prided itself on "free access." Admission fees are not the answer for taxpayers, who have already paid through the federal government's 70 percent contribution to this public institution's annual budget. Federal taxpayers do not expect to pay again through an admission fee to a federally-financed institution.

I urge my colleagues to support this bill.

HONORING THE LIFE OF VENETIA
BRYERS**HON. BART STUPAK**

OF MICHIGAN

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, March 4, 2010

Mr. STUPAK. Madam Speaker, I rise to recognize the life and achievements of Venetia Bryers of Gladstone, Michigan. Venetia devoted her life to developing and improving emergency medical services in Delta County and throughout Michigan's Upper Peninsula. As an entrepreneur and advocate, Venetia often travelled to Washington, DC to advocate for emergency medical personnel and medical services across our Nation. Venetia was also a close personal friend going back 40 years to when we were classmates together at Gladstone High School.

Venetia's devotion to public service began with her career choice to study criminal justice at Northern Michigan University. In 1974, Venetia began working for the city ambulance service in Escanaba, and within a year she had become a full-time partner in the business changing its name to Rampart EMS. Venetia became the sole owner of Rampart in 1979, eventually selling it to Marquette General Health Systems in 1998, but staying on as director of emergency medical services.

Under her leadership and vision Rampart EMS grew into a successful company that